New Year’s greetings and blessings from the Stewardship Office

May this New Year of 2012 be one of peace and reconciliation between nations, in communities, at Church and especially in our homes. Authentic witness to the peace of Christ begins within each of us. May we all experience His peace in our hearts and be compelled to do everything we are asked with humility and great love!

A Stewardship Resolution for the New Year: Living with Compassion

January is traditionally the time for new beginnings, fresh starts. For the Christian steward, the grace of being given another day, or God willing, a whole new year, stirs our deep gratitude. But it also calls us to ask what a “resolution” should really be. Our first resolve should always be to involve ourselves more intimately in the life of Christ, and how better to do that than by embracing Christ’s call to be compassionate?

After all, Jesus himself instructed us, “Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate” (Luke 6:36). Clearly, we strive now to live and give compassionately, as we generally understand the term. We try to be kind, considerate and understanding individuals. We share with others. But Jesus’ words challenge us to embrace a compassion that is much deeper, much more radical than our general understanding.

The word compassion, at its root, means “to suffer with.” This goes beyond merely writing a check, offering a prayer or sending a note. Suffering is not a popular notion in our society and we strive to avoid it. But now we hear Christ instructing us to “suffer with” the poor, the vulnerable, the powerless, the neglected, the weak.
How can we possibly choose such a journey, this challenge to be truly present to those who suffer?

All things are possible with God, and it is through a commitment to a life of discipline, discipline in action and discipline in prayer, that we move towards the goal of true compassion. The Christian steward is committed to the Eucharistic life, and it is through this life which Christ offers us that we gain the courage and the will and even the need to follow him in his own example of compassion.

Compassion is the doorway to a more responsive stewardship and a committed discipleship. Through our deepening sense of compassion in 2012, may we resolve to be the kind of Christian stewards who bring Christ’s presence to a suffering world.

A Stewardship Prayer for 2012:

Gracious and Loving God, the old year has passed and a new year begun. We thank you for Your active presence in our busy lives, for the opportunities given, and for blessings received. As we embrace a new year, breathe freely through us and renew our spirits with fresh resolve and purpose. Give us the grace to be good stewards of all that You have entrusted to us and to serve You with generous, compassionate and loving hearts. Bless our days ahead. Give us the courage to be faithful. And show us how to proclaim the Good News of Your Son, Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God forever and ever. Amen.

(Both articles above are from the ICSC website: www.catholicstewardship.com)

Archdiocesan Eucharistic Congress: A Stewardship Experience!

In case you missed it, the Archdiocesan Eucharistic Congress on November 5 was truly a stewardship experience. More than 800 people had a chance to gather and pray, to listen and to appreciate Bishop Richard Gagnon’s heartfelt address and most importantly to make a conscious effort to make the Eucharistic a priority. From Archbishop Miller’s homily in the morning, to the fine details and interesting nuances about the changes in the Mass with Fr. Tien Tran, there was something for everyone!
Stewardship initiatives and opportunities planned for 2012

- March 10, 2012 — A Day of Discernment: Personal Talents and Christ’s Voice in My Life, sponsored by the Stewardship Office and open to all.

In preparation for a new year and to embrace the season of Lent which will soon be upon us, the Stewardship Office is presenting a Day of Discernment at Our Lady of Fatima Parish. This full day’s workshop will be presented by Father Elton Fernandes, SJ. Father Elton will offer a series of talks and interactive sessions that will encourage us to examine where personal gifts and Christ’s invitation come together in our lives. The workshop will examine topics such as: What is discernment? How do I know which voices in life are from God and which are not? How can I make decisions in life in light of Christ’s voice? The sessions will also encourage personal reflection: In what ways can I more clearly identify the gifts that Christ has given me? Can these gifts help me to discover my personal vocation more deeply? How am I called to live out these gifts for the good of others? Details for registration will appear on the RCV webpage shortly.

Other events to watch for:

- January 15, 2012 — The week for World Day of Migrants and Refugees begins January 9, 2012 with a week of prayer and reflection, culminating on Sunday, January 15, 2012 with a special Mass at St. Helen’s Parish, Burnaby, at 5:00 p.m. As members of the one Body of Christ, we are indeed our brother’s keepers. As good stewards and in the spirit of generous hospitality, let us support the newcomers in our midst. Some ways to express our love include:
  - Helping them to keep their faith & hope in Jesus Christ,
  - Welcoming them as members of our parishes, and
  - Helping them to settle into our communities with dignity and respect.

- February 17/18, 2012 - The Archdiocesan Conference at the Vancouver Convention Centre begins with a concert on Friday evening with celebrated musician, Matt Maher and continues on Saturday with all-day presentations and breakout sessions. Outstanding speakers include: Mike Patin, Father Paul Nicholson and Mary Kaufman,
to name only a few. For details on registration and to learn more about this exciting first for our Archdiocese, go to: http://www.rcav.org/conference/.